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Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: In the Matter of Restoring Internet Freedom, WC Docket No. 17-108

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my strong support for the existing net neutrality protections and for the continued classification of Internet service providers (ISPs) as Title II telecommunications services.

When I pick up the phone and make a phone call, for example to schedule an appointment at my doctor's office, I expect the phone company to connect me to my doctor's office. I do not expect them to block the phone call, insert an ad for a different doctor, degrade the quality of my connection to my doctor's office, or in any other way interfere with my communications with my doctor's office. I also expect them not to listen in to the phone call, use where I called for marketing purposes, or in any other way attempt to share or use information about where I called or what I said on that call for any purposes.

In much the same way, when I use my doctor's website to schedule an appointment, I expect my ISP to connect me directly to my doctor's website. I do not expect them to block the website, insert an ad for a different doctor, reroute me to a different doctor's website, degrade the quality of my connection to my doctor's website, or in any other way interfere with my communications with my doctor's website. I also expect them not to listen in to my browsing session, use which website I visited for marketing purposes, or in any other way share or use information about which websites I visited or what transpired while connected to the website for any purposes.

The similarities between what I use the phone for and what I use my Internet connection for are striking. That's because where I previously might have picked up the phone and made a phone call, I now do online using the Internet. Much as my phone company used to serve as a common carrier and my Title II telecommunications provider, my ISP now serves as a common carrier and my Title II telecommunications provider. I really expect nothing more from my ISP other than to provide an unfettered and private connection to the websites I want to visit. That's the very definition of a common carrier and a Title II telecommunications service and thus the appropriate classification of my ISP specifically, and in general, all ISPs.

The chairman has attempted to argue that because most ISPs offer domain name servers (DNS) that somehow transforms them from a telecommunications service into an information service. This argument falls flat. Phone companies offer directory lookup services. Many people never use this optional service provided by the phone companies choosing instead to build their own list of contacts or use a third-party directory service (e.g., look up the phone number of a business on Google). The offering of this optional service never changed their status as providing Title II telecommunications services.

In much the same way, the use of an ISP's DNS is completely optional. Many people, myself included, do not use the DNS provided by the ISP. They instead opt to use a DNS provided by a third party such as those offered by OpenDNS or Google. Offering an optional information service, which I do not use, in no way changes the fact that I expect my ISP to provide an unfettered and private connection to the websites

I want to visit. The underlying expectation of the ISP is still to provide Title II common carrier telecommunications services regardless of what optional information services they may offer on top of that network.

I use the Internet extensively in my day-to-day life. In fact, my modern life would not be possible if I were not able to reach the websites and services I use on a daily basis. I use a lot of the same services others use. I use Godaddy to host my email. I use Google DNS. I use Google Search. I use Facebook and Twitter. I stream video using services like Netflix, Amazon, Vudu, and YouTube. I shop online—often for obscure items I can't find locally or even in the greater Denver metropolitan area.

I work from home full time using a VPN connection back to my employer. I use instant messaging, Webex, and a VoIP phone to communicate with my coworkers around the world. I use RDP, VNC, and NX to access remote systems at work. I do all my banking on the Internet. I haven't set foot in a bank in over a decade. I pay my bills online, I deposit checks online, and I check my account balances and transfer funds online. I communicate with my doctor online. I can now check lab results, review follow-up instructions, and refill prescriptions online.

I also use a few cloud-based services and other devices that require a robust upstream connection to remote servers. One such service is a 3D modeling software package where all my design files are stored on a remote system. Another such service is a backup solution that lets me have an offsite copy of all my files, photos, and videos in case of a disaster at home. My thermostat, sprinkler controller, and lighting are accessible over the Internet. I host a small blog using a server at Namecheap.com. I create videos and upload them to YouTube. One of the more advanced applications for the Internet lets me order custom-made circuit boards and another lets me order custom-made 3D printed parts for some hobby-type projects.

If you look at how I use the Internet, not one of the services listed above is a service provided by my ISP. Furthermore, not one piece of information I requested originates within the ISP's network and not one piece of information I sent terminates within the ISP's network. If I moved and had to switch to a different ISP, the selection of an ISP would make absolutely no difference in which services I used on the Internet. In fact, my only selection criteria for an ISP would be cost and how well they can connect me to the third-party services I listed above. This further reinforces my point that I expect my ISP to provide an unfettered and private connection to the services I wish to use. The only way to enforce this expectation is through the net neutrality rules and the only way to enforce those rules is to maintain the classification of Internet service providers as Title II telecommunications services.

In the case of a few of the services I use, the ISPs offer their own competing version of the service. For example, I host my blog on a server provided by Namecheap.com because it's inexpensive and they have good customer service. Comcast has competing hosting services but I don't use those. In a world without net neutrality protections, Comcast has both the financial incentives and technical means to block, throttle, or otherwise impede their subscribers' ability to reach Namecheap.com's servers and thus my blog. This action would force me to pay to use Comcast's more expensive and less customer-friendly hosting services to reach those subscribers. Then I'd have to repeat this for AT&T, Verizon, and Charter. Quickly hosting my little blog balloons from a reasonable personal expense to something outrageous as the four dominant telecommunications companies abuse their market power in last-mile Internet access to shut down a competing hosting service. Title II classification and net neutrality is essential to prevent this type of abuse.

This type of abuse is most clearly demonstrated in the entertainment realm where a few of the ISPs have imposed data caps and overage charges. By imposing these caps on third-party video services but exempting their own video services, they're attempting to steer consumers away from competing and often superior video services to their own failing video services. This interference is an abuse of the ISPs dominant position in providing last-mile Internet access. The net neutrality rules don't specifically ban caps and overage charges but they left open the ability for the FCC to examine their effect on competition on a case-by-case basis. Net neutrality protections and Title II classification are essential to ensuring

customers have access to the video services of their choice as well as ensuring the next Netflix or YouTube is not shut down before it's even started.

As I alluded to above, when I purchase Internet access my primary considerations are the cost of the service, the downstream and upstream speeds of the service, and the ability of the service to connect me reliably to the third-party services I wish to use. If I purchase Internet access at 25Mbps downstream and 5Mbps upstream, I expect to be able to download files from any service or website at 25Mbps and to upload files to those same services or websites at 5Mbps with the only limitation being the ability of the remote server to send or receive data at similar rates. I should not need to purchase a special telecommuters package from the ISP to be able to use Webex or place a VoIP phone call that only runs at 100kbps when I have already purchased 25Mbps/5Mbps Internet service. In fact, the only way for the ISP to create any market segmentation so that they could offer a special telecommuters package would be to interfere with my existing measly 100kbps VoIP stream. Title II classification and net neutrality protect me from this type of abuse.

I live about a mile from the Colorado State University campus in a typical suburban neighborhood. Using the FCC's definition of broadband, I have one, maybe two, options for broadband Internet access. The first provider is the local cable company. They can provide me with speeds meeting the FCC definition of broadband Internet access. The second option is the local telephone company. The local telephone company just this past month or two began advertising a service using DSL technology that meets the FCC's definition of broadband. Unfortunately, there's no real ability to see what speeds I would get without signing up for service due to issues with the local copper loops that vary from household to household. One or two players is not a competitive market by any stretch of the imagination. Similar situations play out across the entire country. Where telecommunication markets are uncompetitive, it is the role of the FCC to ensure the market players do not abuse their market position or abuse their customers.

In conclusion, I strongly support the existing net neutrality protections and the existing classification of Internet service providers (ISPs) as common carrier Title II telecommunications services. I'm fearful the chairman will ignore my comments as well as the millions of other comments in support of a strong and robust Internet ecosystem and instead overturn these most basic of consumer and business protections in the name of securing future profits for a very small set of politically powerful companies.

Sincerely,
/s/ Glen Akins

P.S. I find the title of this docket farcical. Just whose freedom is the chairman attempting to restore? The freedom of consumers and businesses to connect to each other without interference from their telecommunications provider? Or the freedom of their telecommunications provider to interfere with that communication in an attempt to gouge, extract, and milk every last nickel and dime from consumers and businesses? My suspicion is it is the latter.